

A wrong righted

Forgiveness granted for church's racist past

OXFORD, Miss. (BP and local reports) — When First Church, Oxford, passed a resolution earlier this year apologizing for its 1968 decision to exclude African Americans from worship services, it opened the door for racial reconciliation in the city.

"I had never seen a church or any organization move that seriously toward repentance and then apologize without any excuse," said Andrew Robinson, pastor of Oxford's historically black Second Baptist Church, a National Baptist congregation that accepted the apology and granted forgiveness.

"We had always felt that if we were going to make an apology, we needed the apology to some degree," said Eric Hankins, senior pastor at First Church.

"Three weeks after the vote to approve the resolution on racial reconciliation, several of our leaders and I were given the opportunity by Pastor Robinson to present our apology and a request for forgiveness to his congregation.

"Andrew and I had been friends for several years, and he had given me great counsel early in the process of addressing our sins of the past. Also, because the resolution spoke directly to a sin against Second Baptist (we had refused to host a community prayer meeting because Second Baptist had been

invited), we felt it most appropriate to present the request to them.

"Pastor Andrew took a couple of weeks to get his people ready, and then two deacons and several church members accompanied me to Second Baptist after our morning

"I had never seen a church or any organization move that seriously toward repentance and then apologize without any excuse."

Andrew Robinson, pastor of Second Church Oxford



"One of the leaders from Second Baptist made a motion to receive the resolution, and the church voted unanimously to accept our apology and grant us forgiveness."

Since the apology, First Church

see FORGIVENESS on p. 9



BROTHERS IN CHRIST — Andrew Robinson (left), pastor of Second Church in Oxford, and Eric Hankins, pastor of First Church in Oxford, share a light-hearted moment while visiting in Robinson's office at Second Church. (BP photo)

GuideStone addresses government shutdown

DALLAS (BP) — The partial shutdown of the federal government has prompted GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention to issue an advisory to its retirement plan participants to "stay the course" in their investments/savings.

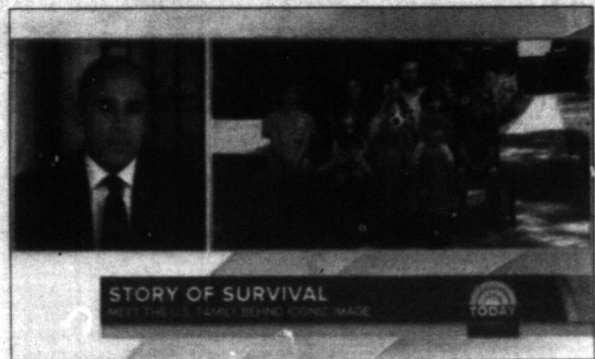
Congressional gridlock over the Affordable Health Care Act, or Obamacare, pushed the government into its partial shutdown on Oct. 1 at the start of the federal fiscal year.

GuideStone, the financial services entity of the Southern Baptist Convention, notes in its Oct. 10 advisory, "The concerns over government and fiscal issues have led to uncertainty, which in turn, has led to market volatility and moderate corrections. Despite these events, today's S&P 500 Index level is above its level in August of this year."

The advisory acknowledges, "Historically, government shutdown and debt-ceiling discussions have caused an increase in short-term volatility." Ron Dugan, president of GuideStone Capital Management, is quoted as stating,

see GUIDESTONE on p. 4

Anxious grandparents awaited word on Kenya attacks



ESCAPING TERROR — Philip and Katherine Walton sit with their five children for an interview with Matt Lauer on NBC's Today show after the narrow escape by Katherine and the children from terrorists who attacked Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, on Sept. 21. (BP image)

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Libby Panter was en route from Virginia to Mississippi to visit family when she got the phone call.

Her son-in-law Philip Walton was distressed and practically unintelligible as he gave them the horrible news from Kenya. Her daughter — Philip's wife Katherine — had gone shopping in Nairobi. Terrorists had overtaken Westgate Mall, entrapping her and her five children in the middle of the mayhem.

"He was broken up with emotion, and we couldn't understand him. We had to work to make it clear what he was saying," said Panter, an emeritus International Mission Board (IMB) missionary who formerly served in Africa.

Philip works in Nairobi but was in North Carolina on business

when the siege took place. Like Katherine, he grew up as the child of IMB missionaries in Africa, and they have chosen to raise their family in the land where they were raised.

Panter and her husband Dan were horrified to hear the news on Sept. 21, but they immediately turned to God. "The only thing we could think to do was to cry out to the Lord and pray," she said, "and then we started to get in touch with friends and family and told them to pray."

About an hour later, Philip called back to say that his family had safely made it out of the mall.

Libby has talked with her daughter numerous times since the siege and said she seems to

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Are Christians a hate group?

Todd Starnes, former assistant editor at Baptist Press in Nashville and currently a reporter for FoxNews who writes a commentary called American Dispatch, reported October 14 on FoxNews.com that Tupelo-based Christian ministry American Family Association (AFA) has been listed by a U.S. Army instructor as a "hate group," along with the Ku Klux Klan, Black Panthers, and other radical organizations.

Starnes also reports that the presentation was made at Camp Shelby, the sprawling National Guard base south of Hattiesburg that has taken on expansive new training and preparation roles since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Anyone who follows AFA knows how ludicrous that allegation really is. The AFA released a statement to Starnes that read in part, "The American Family Association has received numerous accounts of military installations as well as law enforcement agencies using a list compiled by the Southern Poverty Law Center, which wrongfully identifies and defames AFA."

The scurrilous and discredited Southern Poverty Law Center is a subject for another column, but suffice to say that AFA is an independent organization that has no ties to the Mississippi Baptist Convention, and thus can defend itself from such an insulting charge. However, this sordid incident holds many lessons for other Christian groups in modern America who will undoubtedly find themselves under similar government scrutiny in the future.

"I had to show Americans what our soldiers are now being taught," said a soldier who attended the presentation at Camp Shelby and asked not to be identified, as quoted by Starnes. "I couldn't just let this one pass."

Starnes wrote that the unidentified soldier sent him a photograph from the presentation that showed an instructor standing in front of a projection screen, on which a slide contained the headline, "American Family Association," and then listed other groups such as the Klan, Westboro Baptist Church, the Black Panthers, and the Nation of Islam.

"The instructor said AFA could be considered a hate group because they don't like gays," the soldier told me. "The slide was talking about how AFA refers to gays as sinners and heathens and derogatory terms," Todd wrote.

"It's not the first time the Army has accused conservative Christian groups of being domestic hate groups," Todd wrote. "Earlier this year, I exposed Army briefings that classified evangelical Christians and Catholics as examples of religious extremism. Another briefing told officers to pay close attention to troops who supported groups like AFA and the Family Research Council. One officer said the two Christian ministries did not 'share our Army Values.'"

"At the time the military assured me those briefings were isolated incidents and did not reflect official Army policy. If that's true, how do they explain what happened at Camp Shelby?"

Indeed, Christians and Christian ministries are being smeared in many places in this country, including Mississippi and not just at federal government installations.

According to The Clarion Ledger newspaper in Jackson, Brandon High School Principal Buddy Bailey recently banned Christian youth ministers from campus during lunch periods, when they were visiting with students who had invited them.

Bailey quickly backed down as negative reaction grew to his edict, which even the local American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) wouldn't support.

In another Brandon incident, an appointed board of the City of Brandon recently recommended that the city deny a request to construct a 110-foot, lighted cross on the Interstate 20 property of First Church, Brandon.

While the city goes all-out in its march to legalize alcohol, it apparently doesn't have the stomach to allow a simple symbol of Christianity to be displayed on private property bordering one of the busiest stretches of highway in Mississippi.

This is not meant to excessively criticize the City of Brandon, its schools, nor its citizens. Such incidents have occurred all across the state as our leaders have shuddered at the prospect of being hauled into court, or placed in the harsh spotlight of anti-religion groups and the news media, or having their reelection threatened.

It's what is happening in America today, even in the buckle of the Bible Belt. It we don't reverse this trend — and soon, very soon — we could one day be forced to whisper the name of Jesus only in our darkened and isolated churches. Think about it.

The battered cardboard signs

It seems all too common to be confronted by the plaintive look of a beggar standing at a crowded intersection. "Hungry and Homeless ... Need Help," the tattered cardboard sign often reads, held just beneath an unshaven neck. "What a sad situation," you think to yourself, as you contemplate how best to help.

Being a person of Christian compassion and easily touched by the plight of others, your first impulse is to roll down your window and hand him a few bills quickly grabbed from your purse or wallet, but suddenly there is a caution in your spirit. Isn't this the same guy who has been standing here for months? Where does he live, and didn't you just read that most of the thousands of dollars collected tax-free by professional panhandlers on street corners across America goes to drugs and booze?

So, wondering whether you are actually helping or hurting, you either shove the bills toward the man or keep your window rolled tight. The light turns green and you drive away, struggling with mixed emotions.

What is the best way, absolutely, for a Christian to give to help relieve hunger around the world? How can you give with the certainty that a single meal is tied to a long-term strategy that ensures people also will have an opportunity to taste the Bread of Life — Jesus?

I believe giving to Global Hunger Relief, formerly the World Hunger Fund, is the best way to bring life and the Light of the world to the starving of the world. Here is why I can make that statement with such confidence:

■ Every gift to Global Hunger Relief is utilized by Southern Baptist missionaries and their ministry partners to meet hunger needs. Sending donations directly to hunger needs is possible because Southern Baptists support their missionaries and missions outreach through the Cooperative Program and internationally through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Other groups may dedicate from 30-70% of their funds to cover administrative costs.

■ Hunger funds play an especially strategic role in taking the Good News to unengaged, unreached people groups.



Guest opinion with Tom Elliff

The vast majority of UUPGs are in parts of the world where people suffer the most from hunger needs. The only way to reach most UUPGs is through humanitarian efforts like those that use hunger funds. The strategic significance of hunger funds has risen as annual receipts have dwindled.

■ In an amazing variety of ways, hunger funds are helping combat human suffering faced by orphans and widows, refugees, victims of sex trafficking, child soldiers, and those in extreme poverty without access to clean water.

■ The ultimate goal is transformed lives — a transformation of body, mind and spirit, for today and eternity. Then new creatures share that transformation with others.

■ Giving through Global Hunger Relief is a distinctively Southern Baptist way to obey the biblical mandates to love our neighbors and help the least of these. Missionaries and their ministry partners use the funds in Gospel-centered projects that share God's love in both word and deed.

■ Global Hunger Relief funds are used both to meet crisis needs (earthquakes, floods) as well as chronic hunger needs (poverty, famine) that span generations and cross barriers and boundaries.

For my money, Global Hunger Relief is the best and most assured way of meeting the world hunger crisis.

Elliff is president of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, headquartered in Richmond, Va. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

THE BaptistRecord

Editor
William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

Associate Editor
Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

Layout/Design
Megan Young
myoung@mbcb.org

Advertising
Emily Jones
ejones@mbcb.org

Circulation Manager
Brenda Quattlebaum
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

Editor Emeritus
Don McGregor

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
Dwayne Parker, Flora Paul Sims, Pontotoc
Barry Burris, Terry Carl White, Meridian
Billie Buckley, Petal
Russell Mord, Sturgis

Postmaster:
Send changes of address to: The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Send news, communication, and address changes to: The Editor, Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org



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NJ judge clears way for same sex marriage

WASHINGTON (BP) — A New Jersey judge has legalized same sex marriage in the state, providing another victory in the growing movement to expand the legal definition of an institution previously limited to a man and a woman.

Superior Court Judge Mary Jacobson ruled the state's refusal to recognize same sex marriage violated the equal protection clause of the New Jersey Constitution. She ordered the state government to begin Oct. 21 permitting same sex marriages.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie has requested a stay on implementation of the ruling and quick consideration of an appeal to the state Supreme Court, The Newark (N.J.) Star-Ledger reported.

The Republican governor, who vetoed a same sex marriage bill approved by the legislature last year, "has always maintained that he would abide by the will of the voters" and has supported the right of citizens to decide the issue in a ballot initiative, the newspaper quoted a Christie spokesman.

If Jacobson's opinion stands, New Jersey will become the 14th state to legalize same sex marriage. California is among the states that grant marriage licenses to gay couples, but the legality of same sex marriage across that state is under a court challenge. The District of Columbia also has legalized same sex marriage.

Russell D. Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, said Christians need to prepare to engage the issue with endurance.

"None of this is really surprising, given where the culture is headed on this issue," Moore told Baptist Press. "Christians do not need to wring our hands. Rather, we need to be ready to point to the Gospel vision of marriage as the permanent one-flesh union of a man and a woman, pointing to the most ultimate aspect of all of reality: the union of Christ to his church."

"This will not be a quick or easy contest of ideas, but rather a long-term articulation of the permanent things of marriage, family and the meaning of human sexuality," he said.

"Christians do not need to wring our hands. Rather, we need to be ready to point to the Gospel vision of marriage as the permanent one-flesh union of a man and a woman, pointing to the most ultimate aspect of all of reality: the union of Christ to his church."

Russell D. Moore
president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty
Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

Jacobson's ruling came three months after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a section of a federal law defining marriage as only between a man and a woman, but upheld the states' authority to limit marriage to a heterosexual couple. In that 5-4 opinion, the justices said the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) violated "equal protection" under the Constitution by refusing to recognize gay marriages.

As a basis for her decision, Jacobson cited the Obama administration's differentiation between same sex marriage and civil unions in the wake of the DOMA ruling. Since the high court's opinion, the federal government has been making rule changes to clarify that homosexual married couples will be treated the same as heterosexual married couples for purposes of such things as taxes and Medicare coverage in nursing homes.

The refusal of the majority of federal agencies to provide benefits to civil unions in states where same-sex marriage is illegal requires New Jersey to "extend civil marriage to same sex couples to satisfy the equal protection guarantees" of the state constitution, Jacobson wrote.

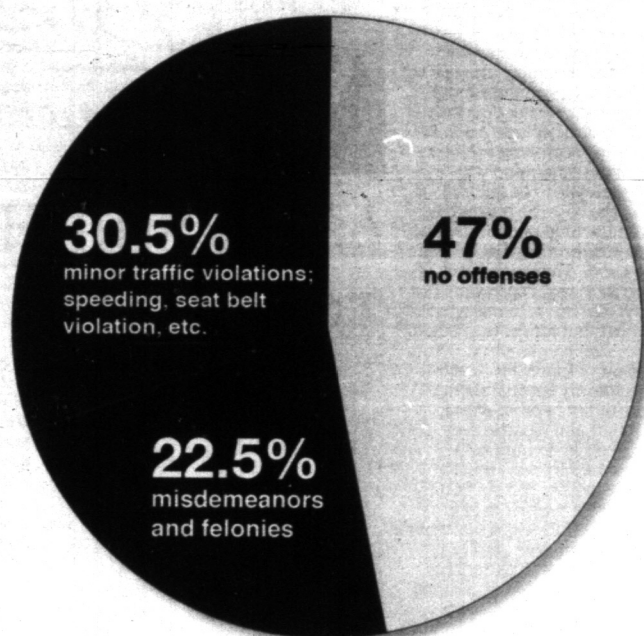
"Whereas before [the DOMA decision] same-sex couples in New Jersey would have been denied federal benefits regardless of what their relationship was called, these couples are now denied benefits solely as a result of the label placed upon them by the State," she wrote.

It remains to be seen whether judges in other states that have legalized civil unions but not same sex marriage will adopt Jacobson's reasoning. Three states — Colorado, Hawaii, and Illinois — have civil unions but not gay marriage.

Brian Brown, president of the National Organization for Marriage, described the ruling as "another outrageous example of judicial activism."

Jacobson "has trampled on the right of the people of New Jersey to define marriage, a right that the Supreme Court has upheld in the very case she misuses to redefine marriage," Brown said in a written statement.

The Snow Cone Man



LifeWay offering background check service to churches

NASHVILLE (BP) — The man serving snow cones at your Vacation Bible School is a convicted sex offender.

That was the news Bill Jones had to deliver to one of the pastors in his association. The pastor came to Jones after learning a volunteer, who had been a "model church member" for two years, may have had a criminal record.

"[The pastor] asked if I would do a background search, as I often do for our smaller churches that cannot afford it themselves," said Jones, executive director of Neches River Association in Crockett, Texas. The report did confirm a sex offense conviction.

That Texas church was one of nearly 5,000 churches and religious organizations that have used backgroundchecks.com through a relationship with LifeWay Christian Resources over the past five years. During that time, more than 84,500 background checks were run through the program.

Of those background investigations, 53% (44,946) returned some type of issue, ranging from minor traffic violations to felony convictions, according to Jennie Taylor, a LifeWay coordinator who manages backgroundchecks.com

Not all of the issues required any action, but more

than 22.5% (19,202) of the screenings returned records with misdemeanor or felony offenses. (Statistics reflect results from clients who have purchased background check services from backgroundchecks.com through LifeWay's OneSource program.)

The Texas church now understands the importance of running background checks ahead of time, Jones said. "They now have a policy that everyone who works in [children and youth] areas will have a current background check on file," he said.

Monongahela Association in West Virginia also uses the service to run background checks on all volunteers for their children and youth camps.

"It's a way to help keep kids safe," association administrative assistant Jerilyn Smith said. "We want to assure parents that we are doing all we can to protect their children from those who would want to harm them."

Under the LifeWay program, churches and religious organizations can use the background check service at discounted rates to screen children's ministry workers, camp counselors, bus drivers, and other volunteers and staff.

"Leaders from churches and organizations who use Life-

Way's background checks service say protecting those God has placed under their care is paramount," Taylor said.

Backgroundchecks.com has "an extensive collection of public record sources," including over 450 million records in its database and also gives easy to read reports, Taylor said.

Having access to a national database was important for First Church in Brownsville, Texas. "I tried using another background check website and they only searched through Texas," while backgroundchecks.com checks records from all 50 states, said Heather Smith, office assistant at First Church.

Jones encourages all churches to run background checks and "have policies in effect on how those checks can be used in a redemptive manner for those that come back with a criminal past."

For more information, visit LifeWay.com/backgroundchecks or call (800) 464-2799.

For additional resources to help churches avoid the devastating effects of sexual abuse and other moral failures by staff members or volunteers, visit sbc.net/localchurches/ministryhelp.asp and sbclife.net/pdf/ProtectingOurChildren.pdf.

Time for what you ask? **These are days of opportunity and you still have time to be a part of Pastor Appreciation Month because it is the whole month of October.** Some of you may have already done something, but if you have not this is your opportunity. I do not always call attention to **Pastor Appreciation Month** simply because I personally feel that appreciation should be everyday—365 and in every direction possible. I hesitate also because it seems as though something is missing in sincerity or the value of the expression when you have to tell someone to be grateful. It is somewhat like the boy who pushed his little brother into the mud puddle and was forced to tell his little brother that he was sorry for what he did. There was a lack of the ring of sincerity in that expression, but he did it anyway. His real remorse was not for his little brother, but for getting caught and having to say that he was sorry.

October is also Eye Injury Prevention Month. I appreciate my ophthalmologist for I can see a lot better because of him than I could without him. Expressing gratitude, appreciation, encouragement and support are valued in every setting whether family, school, work or in friendships. How long has it been since you genuinely and thoughtfully expressed your appreciation for your pastor? I am not talking about giving him a big gift. That is all well and good, but a word of genuine kindness goes a long way also. It is not a bad thing to personally or corporately take the opportunity to say to the caring leader of your church, "We do appreciate you!"

It would be a good thing if all of us could see this kingdom work in a much larger perspective than we view it. This is a God thing that only the Lord Himself can put together and manage. Sometimes we do not see the fullness of it, but He does call, prepare and place shepherds in His flock. It is true that His flock is made up of sheep, not snakes, bears, wolves or even goats. It is true that sometimes shepherds are not perfect in leading their sheep. It is also true that sometimes sheep wander off and get into stuff that



You Still Have Time

they shouldn't. So with a large measure of desire to follow the plan of God, the shepherd and sheep need to stay together, to care about each other and see that the Lord is at work among them.

Now please understand that I know that this is a two-way street. It is just an observation, but I have noticed that the pastors who are appreciated the most are often those who appreciate others the most. It is strange how that works. If you are going to live with a constant snarl on your face, a growl in your attitude and a clinched fist posture, you will probably find that you will be encircled by folks just like that. This is the opportune time. Regardless of what anyone else thinks or says, you and I can express appreciation to one another. It will make a difference. You will make a difference.

Just a surface reading of the epistles in the New Testament written by Paul will bring you to a new understanding of what an incredible impact a group of people in a church had on his life. He may have been thousands of miles away from where they were, but they continued to encourage, inspire and bless him. Just read through the little short letter that he wrote to the Philippian church. You will see people who had been so caring, loving and supportive that regardless of what was happening to him they lifted him above the

situation. You can do the same thing and you still have time.

Now that brings me to say just a word about the opposition, by that I mean the opposition to Pastor Appreciation Month. I have actually had people to say things to me like, "Well, we really do not appreciate our pastor" or even more pointedly, "We don't like our pastor." Obviously, they do not want to have a **Pastor Appreciation Month**. Sadly, what they do not realize is that while they may have a reason not to really care for their pastor more often than not they are saying more about themselves than they are about him. If a pastor does not love his church, that is a spiritual problem that he needs to address. It is not just the fact that he happens to be in a difficult church with ornery people and ill-spirited folks. For at one time or another, those words can describe all of us. In the maturing process in our walk with the Lord, there is an overcoming of the differences and the difficulties that may exist among us. We grow to a place where we can have love for and even a better understanding of people who are not just like us and who do not think just as we do.

I have had people to say to me that they do not want to show appreciation for their pastor. They just want him to leave. I have known pastors who

wished that some of their people would leave, but the reality is that those are both wrong attitudes. As you know, two wrongs do not make a right. I will never forget some years ago a dear old pastor was at a church near the church where I was the pastor. He was confronted between Sunday School and church by a member who was angry about something and did not like him. The member was very vocal in stopping the pastor and saying, "I think that it is time you leave our church." The pastor with sarcasm and quick wit responded, "Well, as best I remember you were here before I was. Maybe it is time for you to leave." Neither one of them did, but both of them ramped up their bitterness and lack of appreciation for each other. You can imagine what a happy place that was. The bottom line is that if you have opposition to expressing appreciation either people to your pastor or pastors to your people, feel free to simply do nothing. If that meets the need in your life, press on!

There is one other opposition that I have heard more than once. In fact, I have heard it numerous times and that is if we do something nice for him or express appreciation in October, what will we do when it gets to be Christmas, his fifth anniversary or his however you would like to fill in the blank. Well I do understand that can create difficulty, but I also understand that being thoughtful, appreciative and expressing kindness to someone is very important. Just keep the reins tight on that and don't overdo it. God forbid that we would do something nice for the pastor in October and have to face an expression of love and support later on in a couple of months.

This month is a month of opportunity. It is also a month of opposition, but it is also a month of ophthalmology. Do what you can, do what you would like and may God bless you in the doing and bless what the doing does in the life of someone else.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

KENYA

cont. from p. 1

be doing well, but is exhausted and a little overwhelmed by their newfound fame through numerous interviews and stories in the international news media.

"She acts wonderfully," Libby said, "and she would give all praise to the Lord for that."

Katherine and the kids have been through a couple of counseling sessions and she has struggled with insomnia, but is slowly getting better. Her oldest son Blaise, age 14, has had the hardest time moving past the incident because he actually saw a grenade blow up three people right in front of him. He seems to be processing slowly and silently.

Blaise's younger brother Ian, age 10, is the one who wants to talk about what happened in detail. The girls — Portia, age four, who has become famous as the little girl in the picture that has gone viral; Gigi, age two; and Petra, 13 months — have been less affected because of their ages and because God seemed to protect them in a supernatural way.

"The [older] girls seemed to go into a type of 'sleep mode' during the incident," Libby said. "That in itself was a miracle, but there are so many testimonies to the Lord," including how Petra's crying didn't draw the terrorists' attention.

Katherine and the girls were on the first



CLOSE CALL — Portia Walton (right), age four, races into the arms of her unidentified rescuer during the Sept. 21 terror attack on Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya. Portia's mother and her four siblings also escaped after close contact with several of the Islamic extremists. (BP photo)

floor of a grocery store directly in the line of fire. Although the terrorists appeared to make eye contact with her, they turned and walked away as if she were invisible to them. Her boys were across the store from her.

Another American family living in Kenya who also were in the store that day grabbed the boys and got them to safety. Katherine's

and the girls' rescuer was a Muslim man who went to free his brother. He ended up rescuing many people, and Libby praises God that among them were her daughter, and granddaughters.

Although the man's plan was to go there for his brother, Libby believes the Lord sent him there to rescue her family as well.

GUIDESTONE

cont. from p. 1

"These types of events tend to be temporary in nature, with markets typically turning their focus toward economic data and company fundamentals once solutions have been reached."

The advisory counsels, "Most experts believe that the debt ceiling will be raised before the deadline and that investors should maintain their long-term strategic asset allocation. We agree." Joy Roberts, GuideStone's personal financial services director, is quoted as saying, "Stay the course unless your retirement timeline or needs have changed. We believe a well-diversified portfolio gives investors the best opportunity to successfully meet investment goals."

GuideStone serves more than 36,000 churches and ministry organizations and more than 163,000 retirement plan participants. Total defined contribution retirement plan assets exceeded \$8.8 billion as of September 30, while total organizational assets of GuideStone exceeded \$12.3 billion.

First Person: Truth ultimately prevails in Matthew Shepard story

By Kelly Boggs
Correspondent

A recently released book casts doubt on one of the homosexual rights movement's most venerated icons. It seems likely the story promoted about Matthew Shepard's murder 15 years ago is primarily a myth.

Matthew Shepard died on Oct. 12, 1998, at the Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins, Co. Five days earlier the University of Wyoming student had been violently beaten, tortured, and tied to a fence near Laramie, Wyo.

In the hours following the assault on Shepard, two of his friends speculated to investigators that he had been targeted because he was homosexual. Homosexual activists quickly alerted the news media, and representatives from both descended on Laramie.

Even before any real facts had been established, homosexual activists promulgated the narrative that Shepard was the victim of a brutal hate crime. The media swallowed the story and, in short order, Shepard was deemed a

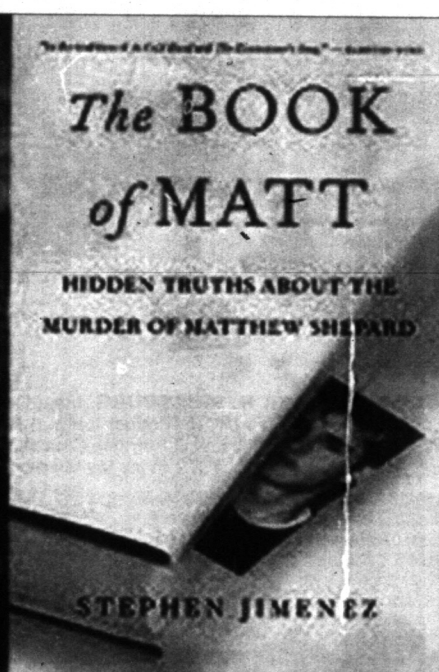
martyr in the cause for homosexual rights.

It was just a dark twist of fate, many insisted, that caused Shepard to encounter the homophobes who took his life. Many similar beatings would occur, activists insisted, unless hate crimes laws were enacted to protect homosexuals.

Since his death, Shepard has been venerated by the homosexual rights movement, portrayed as an innocent young man guilty of nothing more than seeking to live his life as a homosexual. He has been memorialized in song, on stage, and in print. Foundations have been established to help further the agenda of homosexual activists. Hate crimes legislation even bears his name.

There is only one major flaw in all of this — the Matthew Shepard campaign seems to be predicated on a myth.

A recently released book, written by an award-winning journalist who also is a homosexual, contends that Matthew Shepard was not beaten and tortured by homophobic strangers. Rather,



the book maintains, Shepard knew his assailants and had even fraternized with them.

In *The Book of Matt*, Stephen Jimenez puts on display more than a decade's worth of research that includes interviews with more than 100 people, thorough examination of police records, and meticulous scrutiny of court documents.

Jimenez' conclusion is that Shepard was a user, as well as a dealer, of methamphetamine and not only knew his murderers but had even been intimate with one of them. The brutal assault that re-

sulted in Shepard's death, according to Jimenez, was likely a result of drugs and the relationship he had with his killers and not a random homophobic hate crime.

The Advocate, regarded as America's leading homosexual magazine, even admits Jimenez' evidence is more than compelling. "In the process, he [Jimenez] amassed enough anecdotal evidence to build a persuasive case that Shepard's sexuality was, if not incidental, certainly less central than popular consensus has led us to believe," The Advocate said in a review.

"In essence, *The Book of Matt*, is not about the killers' culpability but about sloppiness on the part of the media and allied organizations who used the Shepard case in fundraising pitches," The New York Post stated in a review.

In Kirkus Reviews, the magazine summed up Jimenez' book by noting, "The tragedy was 'enshrined... as passion play and folktale, but hardly ever for the truth of what it was: the story of a troubled young man who had died because he had been involved with Laramie's drug underworld rather than because he was gay.'"

There is no doubt that Shepard's death was brutal, horrific, and heartrending for his family. However, compounding the tragedy was the willingness of homosexual activists and a compliant news media to perpetrate and politicize a myth in order to advance an agenda.

This is not the first time homosexual activists have used a myth in their effort to gain societal acceptance. The movement has long inflated the percentage of people who identify

as homosexual in America. For years activists have maintained that 10% of the U.S. population identifies as homosexual. Numerous studies repeatedly have shown the actual figure to be somewhere between 1.5 to three percent.

Homosexual activists also have repeated the myth that homosexuality is innate and genetic or biological in origin. To date, there has not been one single, definitive, scientific study that has established that homosexuality is innate. Not one.

"For the great enemy of truth is very often not the lie — deliberate, contrived, and dishonest — but the myth — persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic," President John F. Kennedy told the 1962 graduating class of Yale University.

The only way to address a myth is by declaring truth. "You shall know the truth," Jesus said, "and the truth will set you free." The apostle Paul admonished that we should share the truth in love.

When it comes to cultural myths, eventually the truth comes out. When it does, as in the case with Matthew Shepard, we must call attention to the truth.

As to God's truth revealed not only in the Bible but also in creation, we simply must declare it. The light of truth removes the cloak of darkness by which a myth can thrive.

It may take time but truth will always trump a myth, even one as venerated as Matthew Shepard.

Boggs is director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention (LBC) office of public affairs and editor of the *Baptist Message*, weekly newsjournal of LBC.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing: no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs

mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

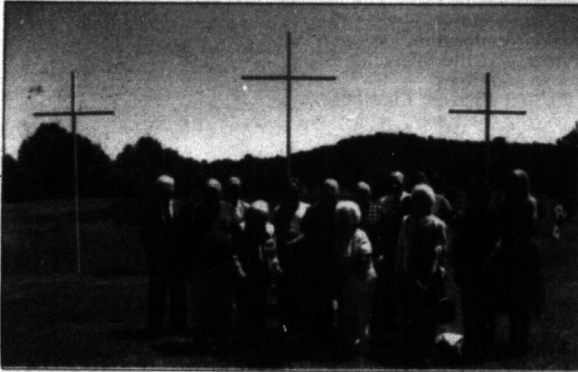
Just for the Record



CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG, hosted an Active Christians Serving Together (ACTS) potluck lunch. Attendees included Wanda and Junius Williams, Enterprise Church. Wanda, sitting by her husband, started ACTS many years ago.



FLOWOOD CHURCH, FLOWOOD, Women of Grace celebrated their fourth annual Princess Tea Party with their young princesses dressed as island princesses.



Darryl and Margie Crawford donated three lighted crosses to **CONCORD CHURCH, BENTON-TIPPAH ASSOCIATION**, placed at the back of the church cemetery. Shown are the Crawfords, pastor, deacons, and those who assisted in the erection and lighting of the crosses during the church's homecoming in May.

NEW LIBERTY CHURCH, MORTON, held a baby dedication Sept. 17. Shown are Will & Latisha Townsend with baby Kinsely Elainna Townsend; Kevin Goodman, Lacey Jolly & baby Richard Lukas Goodman; Beau & Erica Hanna with baby Anistyn Nicole Hanna; and Brandon & Amy McCurdy with baby Brayden Michael McCurdy.



DESOTO CHURCH, DESOTO, honored high school senior Garrett Driskell with an ice cream supper. Driskell is shown receiving a Bible from transitional pastor Charles Davis.



FIRST CHURCH, HICKORY FLAT, licensed Justin Lewis to the gospel ministry Sept. 29. Lewis has been called to serve Walnut Church as youth minister. He is shown with pastor Gary Linville.

In other Church News:

► **Southwestern Seminary** will hold its alumni meeting and luncheon noon, Oct. 29, at First Church, Jackson, in the Family Life Center building junior high room. Tickets, \$8, and can be obtained by contacting Archie Herrin, 1962 National Guard Rd., Columbia, MS 39429, or email archie_herrin@att.net.

► **Rehobeth Church, Pelahatchie**, is hosting Tim Frith and the Gospel Echoes in concert Oct. 19, 6:30 p.m.

College News



Myron Noonkester, dean of the Noonkester School of Arts and Letters, chair for department of history, and co-director for the Center for Study of the Life and Work of **WILLIAM CAREY, D.D.**, has recently been named as the 2013 Mississippi Humanities Teacher of the Year for William Carey University.

Staff Changes



NEW HOME CHURCH, SMITH COUNTY, has called Charles Welch as pastor. He is from the Hattiesburg area and has served many years in the Hattiesburg and Jackson areas.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

Not as many as received him, so that he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name. — John 1:12

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FRIENDSHIP WEST CHURCH, NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION, celebrated its 100th anniversary Oct. 7. Shown presenting the centennial certificate for the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission to pastor Robert Clark is Lowell Ingram, AMD for North Central Association.



FIRST CHURCH, PLANTERSVILLE, celebrated its 125th anniversary Sept. 4. Shown is state representative Steve Holland presenting a resolution to pastor Danny Balint.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Bellevue Church, Pontotoc County:** Revival, Oct. 20 - 23; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; David Ard, speaker; Gerald Waldrop, music; Tommy Inmon, pastor.

► **First Church, Boyle:** Homecoming, Oct. 19 - 20; Sat., picnic, 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Sun., service, 10:30 a.m. followed by lunch; Joseph Anderson, speaker; Zachery Hardy, music leader.

► **First Church, Marion:** Revival, Oct. 20 - 23; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Matt Snowden, speaker; Greg Engell, music; special music Monday with The Singing Saints.

► **First Church, Oloh:** Homecoming, Oct. 20; services, 10 a.m., followed by dinner; Tim Patrick, speaker; Robert Brewer, music.

► **First Church, Pearl:** 60th anniversary, Oct. 20; worship, 10 a.m., followed by lunch and afternoon concert with Forgiven; Matt Powell, speaker; Lee Rider, music; Scott Crawford, pastor.

► **First Church, Clara:** Homecoming, Oct. 20; service, 10:30 a.m., followed by meal; Jim Bradford, speaker; TureHeart, music.

► **Ethel Church, Ethel:** Homecoming, Oct. 20; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by covered dish meal; Bobby Waggoner, speaker.

► **Chunky Church, Chunky:** 49th annual homecoming, Oct. 20; services, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Nick Holden, guest speaker, with Gary Thorne.

► **First Church, Lumberton:** Revival, Oct. 20 - 23; Sun., 10

a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds and noon service; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Nathan Barber, speaker; Daniel Lee, music; John Sapp, pastor.

► **Southside Church, Vicksburg:** Revival, Oct. 20 - 25; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Fri., 7 p.m.; Harvey Reeves, speaker.

► **New Goodhope Church, Pulaski:** Homecoming, Oct. 20; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Curtis Roland, speaker; Charles Robert Jones and Lita Roland, music; Joe Crane, pastor.

► **Richburg Church, Hattiesburg:** Revival, Oct. 20 - 23; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Lyndon Longoria, speaker; Price Harris, music; Paul A. Roney, pastor.

► **Lena Church, Lena:** Revival, Oct. 20 - 23; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; youth night Tuesday; Kevin Cooper, speaker; Danny Harrison, music; Paul Jordan, interim pastor.

► **Central Church, Meridian (formerly South Side):** 125th anniversary, Oct. 19 - 20; Sat., meet and greet, 2 - 4 p.m.; Sun., Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch, fellowship, reminiscing, and memorabilia.

► **Hopewell Church, Franklin Co.:** 200th anniversary, Oct. 20; fellowship time, 10 a.m.; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by dinner on the ground, afternoon singing, testimonies, recognitions, and history report; Wiley Reid, speaker.

Music Leadership Training School now open for enrollment

JACKSON, Ms. (Special) — October begins the second of eight courses offered at four locations in Mississippi sponsored by the Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), in cooperation with the Providence Learning Center of New Orleans Seminary.

The course, Worship/Worship Planning, will meet once a week for two hours for eight consecutive weeks (the Brookhaven location meets on Saturday) at the following locations and times:

► **First Church, Cleveland,** beginning October 14 (6-8 p.m.) Alan Berry, teacher. (662) 843-2701.

► **First Church, Marion,** beginning September 30 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) Buddy McElroy, teacher. (601) 938-8668.

► **Easthaven Church, Brookhaven,** beginning November 2 (9-11 a.m.) Mark Hamilton, teacher. (601) 835-6607.

► **First Church, Booneville,** beginning October 15 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) LuAnne Ford, teacher. (662) 728-6272.

► **Handsboro Church, Gulfport,** beginning October 15 (7-9 p.m.) Louis White, teacher. (228) 860-9616.

The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year pe-

riod. Each course is independent and has no prerequisite. Each student who completes the eight courses earns a certificate from the Providence Learning Center of New Orleans Seminary.

There is a one-time enrollment fee of \$25.00. The cost of each course is \$100.00. A \$60.00 scholarship is available for all first-time students. Students already enrolled are not eligible. The grant is limited to one person per church.

The eight courses are Basic Conducting; Worship/Worship Planning; Reading Music: Rhythm/Pitch; Reading Music: Harmony/Melody; Songs and Hymns for Worship; Building Your Music Ministry; Church Music Resources; Class Voice.

The courses are designed to provide basic training for bivocational music directors and other music leaders in churches.

For more information, contact the teachers listed for each location or Slater Murphy, MBCB church music director, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3276 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 276. E-mail: smurphy@mbcb.org.

BIBL i O C i P H E R

UBJW RB ZK EAP EFIEA, JKW EBJNA RB:

LDF EADI JFE EAB HDW DL RP

OJFSJEZDK; DK EABB WD Z QJZE JUU

EAB WJP.

COJURO EQBKPE-LZSB: LZSB

Clue: Clue: L = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Proverbs 1:5

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004. © 2005



MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

October 29-30, 2013 • First Baptist Church, Jackson

SCHEDULED CONVENTION SPECIAL EVENTS

FBC, Jackson / Baptist Building /
Galloway Methodist Church

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2013

Exhibits/Lifeway

FBC, Jackson-Fellowship Hall East:
3-5 p.m./7-8 p.m.
Set-up LifeWay Christian Bookstore
[Marcus Peagler - 601-292-3283]

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2013

Exhibits/Lifeway

FBC, Jackson-Fellowship Hall East:
7:30 a.m.-9 p.m.
[Marcus Peagler - 601-292-3283]

Mississippi Baptist Convention

FBC, Jackson-Sanctuary; 8:00 a.m. - 9 p.m.
[Executive Administration - Brenda Box -
601-292-3201 / 601-214-1798 (cell)]
Ian Richardson - 601-292-3290 for Sound
and Media
Judy Chen, Ministry Assistant -
601-292-3378 / 601-214-1987 (cell)

Usher Room - Teller Room
Sanctuary Parlor - Credential Room
Usher Room - Resolutions Room - 10 chairs

Mission Service Corp - Invitation Only

FBC, Jackson-Christian Life Center, Room
CLC 307-308; 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
[Deanna Vail - 601-668-5818 (cell)
dvail@mbcb.org]

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

All Convention Board Committees-Baptist
Building; 9 AM
Baptist Building-Skyroom;
10 AM (100-member Board)
[Executive Administration - Brenda Box -
601-292-3201 / 601-214-1798 (cell)]

MBCEF - Mississippi Baptist Christian Educators Fellowship Luncheon

FBC, Jackson-Christian Life Center Dining
Room; 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
[Paul Harrell - 601-927-7237 (cell)]

Christian Action Commission Religious Liberty Conference invitation only

FBC, Jackson-Christian Life Center
Auditorium; 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
[Rita McCollum - 601-292-3329 /
Rob Chambers - 601-214-1979 (cell/text)]

Ministers' Wives Conference

FBC, Jackson-5th floor-rooms;
1:30-3:00 p.m.
[Cathy Taylor - 601-278-1456 (cell)]

Pastors' Conference

FBC, Jackson-Sanctuary;
1:15-4:30 p.m. - 1st Session
6:00-8:30 p.m. - 2nd Session
[Dr. Charles R. Rowland, IV - 601-638-0682]

Mississippi Council on Bivocational/Small Church Ministries Meeting

Baptist Building-Chapel, Jackson; 3-4:45 p.m.
[Cathy Taylor - 601-278-1456 (cell)]

Mississippi Council on Bivocational/Small Church Ministers/Wives Banquet

FBC, Jackson-FH West; 4:45-6:30 p.m.
[Cathy Taylor - 601-278-1456 (cell)]

Acts 1:8 Celebration Dinner

Reservation required
FBC, Jackson-FH West; 4:45-6:00 p.m.
[Chapel Dining Reserved for overflow]
[Laura Marler - 601-942-1573 (cell)]

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2013

Exhibits/Lifeway

FBC, Jackson-FH East; 7:30 a.m.-9 p.m.
[Marcus Peagler - 601-292-3283]

AMD & Seminary Extension Directors (SBC) Breakfast

Baptist Building-Chapel, Jackson; 7-8 a.m.
[Cathy Taylor - 601-278-1456 (cell)]

Annuity Breakfast invitation only

FBC, Jackson-FH West; 7:30-8:30 a.m.
[Carol Taylor - 601-292-3227 chtaylor@
mbcb.org]

Mississippi Baptist Convention

FBC, Jackson-Sanctuary;
8:30-11:30 a.m. - 1st Session
1:30-4:40 p.m. - 2nd Session
6:30-8:00 p.m. - 3rd Session
[Executive Administration - Brenda Box -
601-292-3201 / 601-214-1798 (cell)]

Health Fair

FBC, Jackson, FH East Stage;
8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
[MC Nursing School; Deborah Bolian
601-906-3159 (cell)]

Hispanic Meeting invitation only

Baptist Building-Room 406, Jackson;
11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
[Scheryl Ng (Church Planting) -
601-218-6540 (cell)]

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Alumni Luncheon advance ticket purchase

FBC, Jackson-Christian Life Center;
Rooms 207-208; noon
[Ticket purchase: Archie Herrin -
archie_herrin@att.net] [Dr. Ronnie Falvey,
FBC, Madison]

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Alumni Association Luncheon pay at door

FBC, Jackson-FH West; noon-1 p.m.
[Rev. Britt Williamson, FBC, Rolling Fork -
862-907-1330 (cell)] / britt.williamson@
gmail.com

Stewardship Department Consultants Dinner invitation only

FBC, Jackson-FH West; 4:30-6:30 p.m.
[Lisa Leavell (Stewardship/CP Promotion) -
601-720-7464 (cell)]

Church Planters Fellowship invitation only

Baptist Building-Chapel, Jackson; 4:45 p.m.
[Scheryl Ng (Church Planting) -
601-218-6540 (cell)]

William Carey University Alumni Dinner

FBC, Jackson-Parlor; 4:30-6:30 p.m.
[Cindy Cofield (William Carey University) -
601-318-6561 (office) / 601-928-8834 (cell)]

Chaplains Fall Banquet

Baptist Building-Skyroom, Jackson;
4:45-6:30 p.m.
[Carol Wright - 601-668-6008 (cell)]

Blue Mountain College Alumni Dinner

Galloway Methodist Church; 5 p.m.
Seating is limited.
Available tickets will be at Blue Mt. College
booth in FBC, Jackson-FH East
[Lea Bennett - Alumni Office Alumni Affairs
662-685-4771 xt 119]

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2013

Exhibits/Lifeway

FBC, Jackson-FH East; 7:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
Exhibits: 7:30-10 a.m.
Bookstore: 7:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
[Marcus Peagler - 601-292-3283]

Mississippi Baptist Convention

FBC, Jackson-Sanctuary; 8:30-11:35 a.m.
[Executive Administration - Brenda Box -
601-292-3201 / 601-214-1798 (cell)]

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board 2014 Board Organizational Meeting

Baptist Building-Skyroom, Jackson
immediately following the last session of the
convention
[Executive Administration - Brenda Box -
601-292-3201 / 601-214-1798 (cell)]

MS POSITIONS

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH IN VICKSBURG, MS 39108, IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR/YOUTH DIRECTOR. Please send resume to 6949 Highway 61 S, or e-mail the church at ibc_secretary@bellsouth.net

BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH IN PRENTISS, MS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR. Please send resume to Bethany Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1316, Prentiss, MS 39474

SYLVA RENA BAPTIST CHURCH IN WATER VALLEY, MS IS LOOKING FOR FULL TIME PASTOR. Send resume to Sylva Rena Baptist Church, 17640 Hwy 32, Water Valley MS, 38965

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, NATCHEZ, MS, IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A FULL TIME PASTOR. Please mail resumes to Immanuel Baptist Church 684 Hwy 61 North Natchez, Ms. 39120 Attn: Pastor Search Committee

MINISTER OF STUDENTS / ASSOCIATE PASTOR- BROOKSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH. Job Description available on website www.brooksideob.com. Send cover letter and Resume to: Brookside Baptist Church, Personnel Team 4993 Hwy 302 E. Olive Branch, MS 38654

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UNION HALL BAPTIST CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, MS, IS SEEKING A PART-TIME BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH DIRECTOR. Resumes may be mailed to the church at: 1242 Nola Road N.E., Brookhaven, MS 39601, ATTENTION: Youth Director Search Committee.

DUCK HILL BAPTIST CHURCH IN DUCK HILL, MS IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME STUDENT PASTOR/MINISTER OF MUSIC. Please e-mail resumes to dhbc_secretary@yahoo.com

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Bro. Andrew Ishee
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Evangelist,
Real Evangelism Ministries,
Atlanta, GA

Bro. Duane Moore
Evangelist,
Gainesville, GA

Dr. Tommy Steele
Senior Pastor,
New Life Baptist Church,
Concord, North Carolina

Dr. Raymond Barber
Pastor Emeritus,
Worth Baptist Church,
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Dr. Ergun Caner
PROVOST and Vice President of Academic Affairs,
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FORGIVENESS

cont. from p. 1

has participated in a community-wide interracial worship service, talked with local black congregations about how to partner in evangelism and ministry, and experienced moments of personal reconciliation between white and black believers.

There have been "amazing moments of reconciliation and forgiveness," Hankins told Baptist Press.

"We have the opportunity to now bring the redemption of Christ to bear in this situation," Hankins said. "The bottom line is that something has been done that is wrong. We've recognized it, and we're going to leave our gift at the altar until we get this right so we can be correct in our worship."

"That's the appropriate response to a sin of the past."

The resolution says that First Church "declare[s] as utterly sinful the vote in April 1968 to exclude African-Americans from worship." The apology "unequivocally denounce[s] racism in all its manifestations as a sin against Almighty God."

Although the 1960s in Oxford were an "extremely difficult" time, according to the resolution, "such difficulties in no way excuse what was done."

The resolution continues, "(we) repent... with our whole heart. We seek the forgiveness of the Lord and of African-Americans who

were and are still hurt by these things, and we hope they will extend such forgiveness to us."

Hankins, age 42 and the son of Louisiana Baptist Convention Executive Director David Hankins, arrived at First Church in 2005 and occasionally heard older members say the church had been on the wrong side of civil rights issues. It wasn't until late last year that Hankins got the full story, when deacon emeritus Sylvester Moorhead gave him a copy of deacon minutes from 1968.

Realizing in 1968 that African Americans were testing whether they could be admitted to various churches across the South, the deacons suggested that First Church develop a policy related to black worshippers. Moorhead moved that the deacons recommend an open-door policy for worshippers of all races, and despite some opposition the recommendation was approved by the deacon body.

When it came before the church though, it was voted down on a secret ballot in a special business session after a Sunday morning worship service.

"The church understood the voting down of the open-door policy to be an approval of a closed-door policy," said Hankins.

In the succeeding years, First Church used the vote as a basis for denying blacks access to its resources and facilities. The church once refused to host a communitywide prayer event because

blacks would be in attendance. On another occasion, the church would not let its bus be used to transport black children to a Backyard Bible Club.

By the mid-1970s, however, blacks began to attend worship with the first African American joining in 1980 and the church enjoying increasingly warm relationships with blacks in Oxford. Still, the vote not to welcome African Americans had never been overturned.

Hankins, who holds a Ph.D. in theology from Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, worked with the deacons to craft a resolution nullifying and apologizing for the 1968 decision. He also preached on corporate repentance and gave the church body opportunities to ask questions and offer amendments to the resolution.

On July 21, the church adopted the resolution with more than 600 members voting for it and only four voting against it.

"It was high time," Moorhead, age 93, said of the church's apology. "On the other hand, racism doesn't die that easily and I'm sure we've got some people that still internally are a bit racist, but now they sort of feel like they're in the minority and they won't speak out."

Hankins is quick to point out that not everyone in the church was on the wrong side of civil rights issues in 1968 - Moorhead, for one. He came to Oxford from Colorado in 1949 to serve as a pro-

fessor of education at the University of Mississippi. He and his wife were shocked by the racism they saw and considered leaving the state before deciding to stay in an effort to influence others.

Moorhead became dean of the university's school of education in 1960 and was instrumental in bringing black professors onto the faculty.

Several members of First Church helped make public school integration in Oxford one of the smoothest such efforts in the South, refusing to start private schools for white students to maintain segregation, according to Hankins.

"It would have been exceedingly rare that a Southern Baptist church in Mississippi in the 1960s would even have considered the issue of whether or not to have an open-door policy," Hankins said. "Our church was unique in that it was struggling to try to do what was right." Nevertheless, corporate repentance was required, he said.

Hankins taught the church from 2 Samuel 21 that sin can have ongoing consequences in a community and must be repented of, even after those most responsible for it have died. In 2 Samuel, Israel was experiencing a famine because Saul had broken a covenant with the Gibeonites. Even though Saul was dead, David had to lead the nation in making atonement in order to end the famine.

"David doesn't say, 'I didn't do that. It was Saul. That was not my generation. That's the previous generation,'" Hankins said. First Church stands "in continuity as one body" and must repent of the church's past sins, he told the congregation.

Since the apology, "lots of doors have been opening" for racial reconciliation, Hankins said. For example, a black man from a local Methodist church told Hankins that when he was a teenager, youth groups from around the city began meeting together for encouragement and fellowship but First Baptist stopped the gatherings because they were interracial.

Hankins apologized for his church's actions, and the man in turn apologized for his own racist attitudes in the past toward white people.

Robinson, the pastor at Second Church, said that if more churches with racist pasts followed First Church's lead, hearts of lost African Americans might open to the Gospel.

He said for some blacks, First Church's repentance "will enable them to let go of some of that pressure that keeps their hands closed or their hearts set against the possibility of being witnessed to by white or black pastors."

"I do believe that when people see acts of repentance, acts of kindness extended such as this, it speaks volumes."

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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THANK YOU

Our ministry is grateful for the investments you and others have made in our children and staff since we began 116 years ago.

It was a Mississippi Baptist Pastor from Senatobia who was our very first advocate. Rev. L. S. Foster presented the idea to fellow Baptist pastors and friends, and worked diligently to see the vision of this ministry become a reality. Today we continue, with the help of many more Mississippi Baptist pastors like yourself, to provide for the needs of children in an environment where they can experience God's love.

This month we celebrate you, and the sacrifices you have lead your church to make to ensure that this legacy continues. Thank you for your leadership and your faithfulness.

AUGUST 2013

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The Power to Meet Needs • John 6:5-11, 26-31, 47-51

I have heard it said before there are two aspects of Southern Baptist life that are constant: challenges and opportunities. If you look at our history, I think you will agree. The Baptist story is one marked by remarkable challenges and the resolve of a people to overcome those tests. The times when Baptists have shone the brightest are synonymous with the times we have set aside our differences and worked together in cooperation. Our dark days have been the result of fighting over the miniscule issues of the day, problems of our own making and failing to resemble Christ in the world around us.

I submit to each of us in this week's study both a challenge to answer and an opportunity to grasp. The aim of the lesson this week is to demonstrate Christ's power to meet needs. I have no doubt if you are reading these words that you can attest to the awesome provisions found in Christ. Jesus meets our needs in more ways than we can comprehend, but we cannot afford to stop there. We must see the needs beyond our own lives. There are those in your area and in mine that desperately need something to eat, clothes to wear, and the warmth of a shoulder to lean on. Christ has commanded us to do these things.

Consider these two facts. First, Mississippi has been labeled as the, "most reli-

gious state in the country." The reason for this designation is based on our number of churches as compared to our population. Secondly, we also consistently lead the nation as the state with the highest percentage of people suffering from hunger. Am I the only one that sees the contradiction and problem? We seem to have a disconnect between the tradition of religion and the demonstration of redeeming love. While we in the Magnolia State may be "religious" (whatever that means) we are lacking in genuine and meaningful relationships.

In the first 14 verses of John 6 we see this idea of challenge and opportunity. This is one account of the feeding of the 5,000. This is the only miracle of Christ recorded in each of the four gospels, so we should take note of its significance and implications. Please note the challenge did not lie with Jesus. The challenge rested on the disciples. Would they obey Christ? Would they trust Him to meet what seemed to them, an

impossible task? Christ saw the great need of the crowd as an opportunity. Not only an opportunity to perform a miracle, but also strengthen the faith of the disciples.

This is one of the amazing aspects regarding faith. The world sees hunger, poverty, human trafficking, disease and other ills and in turn, looks to the governments to do something about it, or believes the challenge is too great to meet. The Christian should see these same problems and say, "Thank you, God for this wonderful opportunity

for your Son to be exalted!"

Perhaps you are reading this with the attitude of a cynic. You may be thinking to yourself, "This preacher is writing about a social gospel." Let me put your mind at ease by saying this: there is no such thing as a "social gospel." There is only one gospel and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is, my friend, possible this gospel of action is not what you are accustomed to. What kind of gospel do you have that doesn't change

your life and expect obedience? You have religion without transformation! The gospel of Christ does not retreat from people's pain or suffering, it joins it.

I read recently a series of stories about Baptist churches all around the country doing amazing things in their communities dealing with hunger and poverty. The list is encouraging and long, but admittedly, incomplete. What can we do together in our churches to turn challenges into opportunities? There are enough Christian churches in Mississippi to assure no one goes to bed hungry or without provision for basic needs. You need more motivation? Take a gander at Matthew 25:31-40. There is a final exam coming for each of us. There will be only one question on the test. The question is for the entrance exam into heaven. Don't panic, it is an open book test. He tells us the answer. The question is: What did you do for the least of these we came in contact with everyday?

God doesn't ask about your political party, bible translation preference or even your denomination. He inquires of the opportunities He gave you while on earth. Are we willing to turn challenges into opportunities? The world is waiting. Let's get to work.

McKay is pastor of Harpersville Church, Harpersville.

It's Not About Me • 1 Samuel 24:1-15

To King Saul's shame, he was now spending most of his time looking for opportunities to kill David, the next anointed king. To David's honor and by God's grace, he passed up opportunities to kill his king Saul. Out of duty and respect, he reasoned with Saul and avowed that "my hand shall not be upon thee." Serious hostilities arise when we fail to keep in mind that it's not all about us. As long as David was alive, no matter how distant, how disengaged he was from the king, Saul was on fire to eliminate this empty threat.

When Saul returned from the battlefield he was informed that David was at En Gedi and he rounded up 3,000 of the best of Israel's army to go after him. En Gedi is an interesting spot located a few miles south of Jerusalem on the west side of the Dead Sea. It is the only natural waterfall in Israel (don't think Niagara), and fruit, aromatic and medicinal plants grew there. (Isn't that just like God to stick a tall fountain of refreshing clear, cool, water wafting a soothing sound and aroma with gentle spray and nourishment for good fruit and pretty flowers right in the middle of a dry, parched, rocky, desert?) Nearby were many caves where shepherds took their animals. Treacherous, rocky and hot hillsides not easily navigat-

ed, but Saul and his army of 3,000 was on a mission to assassinate David.

Saul entered a cave to rest where David was hiding. David was able to secretly cut off a piece of Saul's robe, but David later made Saul aware that he had spared his life because he bore no evil intent. V. 5 shows us that David's heart smote him for the evil he had done to his king, and he foresaw that he could pay too high a price to get his own way. Sadly, Saul's life was all about Saul, with self-centeredness and jealousy in control. This was a sure path for adversity.

V. 6. David spoke to his men "I will not do this evil to my master, an anointed of my Lord." He chose to perform as a type of Christ to do good to those who had chosen to do evil. Christianity empowers us all to overcome evil with good. David's behavior was respectful as he bravely bowed before the king with his face to the earth. Filled with honesty and humility, he uttered a

warm and pathetic speech, trying to convince Saul that he had done him a great deal of wrong.

V. 11 David called him "My Father" and with undeniable evidence shows he could have killed him, yet he restrained due to his fear of God. Such a happy command he had of himself. Fear of God is healthy and rewarding.

David knew that God's grace was the source of satisfaction.

1 Sam. 18:12 tells us Saul was afraid of David

because the Lord was with David but had left Saul. David had disciplined himself to do what was right even if he knew he would fail, and his conscience bothered him for thinking about physically harming his king. David would not presume upon the ways of the Lord since they both were anointed, so he now knew he would never harm his king. He admitted his error, treating Saul as he would want to be treated. It's a lonesome (and most likely a

boring) life when you are best friends with only yourself. Choosing the high road diffuses multiple struggles.

Without malice he addressed Saul as "my lord and king" as he bowed to the ground in homage. He gave Saul the opportunity to change his demeanor toward him (how much tongue biting does that take and David had not even heard of James, much less read his book). David knew that the choices he was making would make him better, nobler, and less captious. In John 17 Jesus prayed for us to become one with Him, and He won't abandon us until that happens.

A great prayer for us is "Lord, keep me from thinking only of myself." Saul was spending all his resources hunting down David. David, unable to comprehend that level of animosity, turned away from opportunities to do wicked things to the king. Saul was high on to implosion while David, being led by the Heavenly Father, remained wise as a serpent. Humility highlights a Christ-centered relationship talked about in the Holy Bible. David returned love for hatred.

Gibson is a member of Monticello Church, Monticello.

Bible Studies for Life

with Evelyn Gibson



OBITUARIES

Tommy Cherry, pastor of Ellison Ridge and Yellow Creek churches, Louisville, died Aug. 29. He was a native of Texarkana, Ark. For 33 years he served as pastor of Parkview Church, Leland, on two occasions; Saboula Church, Calhoun County; Ellison Ridge Church, Louisville; and Yellow Creek Church, Winston Association.

William M. Clawson, 92, of Hattiesburg, died October 3 at Bedford



CHERRY

Care Center in Hattiesburg following a brief illness, with burial in Roseland Park Cemetery. He was born May 8, 1921 in Hico, La. He was a Pastor and Interim Pastor of numerous churches throughout Louisiana and South Mississippi and a Missionary to Mexico with the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1953-1966. He began teaching as a Professor in 1965 at William Carey College then later served as Chair of the Department of Biblical Studies and Church Vocations, retiring in 1990. He was an active member of Cartersville Baptist Church in Petal, MS and was also active in many civic organiza-

tions in the Hattiesburg/Petal area. He was preceded in death by his parents, John Thomas and Ila Ophelia Farley Clawson, four sisters and one brother. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Kathryn Jeanette Clawson of Hattiesburg; one son, William Arthur (Sandra Polly Johnson) of Temple, Tex.; two daughters, Kathy Jean Smith (David Lynn) Pearl and Mary Elizabeth Clawson of Bay Springs; four grandchildren, Robert Marion Clawson (Lucy Palazzo) of San Marcos, Tex., Evan Michael Clawson of Temple, TX, John David Smith and Sarah Kathryn Smith both of Pearl; and a host of nieces, nephews, and loving friends.

Just for the Record



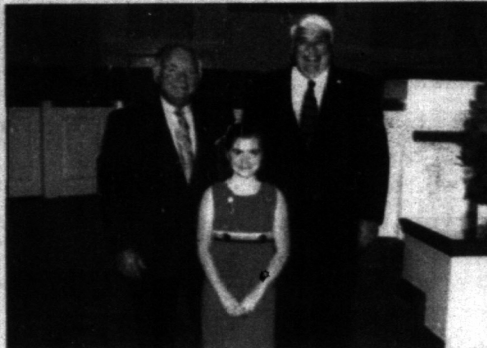
ARLINGTON CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, recently held a mission recognition for Mission Friends, GAs, and RAs.



EAGLE LAKE CHURCH, EAGLE LAKE, ordained four new deacons Sept. 29. Shown are Hank Hearn, Bill Parker, Tim Evans, Jeff Turner, Bobby Culbertson, pastor Wm. "Sonny" Bradshaw, and Charles Watson.



WEST HEIGHTS CHURCH, PONTOTOC, licensed Chuck Patrick and Lane Williamson to the gospel ministry Sept. 29. Shown are pastor David Hamilton, Patrick, Kermit McGregor, and Williamson.



BUNKER HILL CHURCH, COLUMBIA, gave Isabel Shivers and Jiles Grice their three year pens for perfect attendance Sept. 29. They are shown with Randy Gardner, who received his pin for two years perfect attendance.



The Children in Action of **BRANCH CHURCH, SCOTT ASSOCIATION**, attended the Area 6 Mission Madness July 27. Attending were Haleigh & Staci Herrington, Vaden Latham, Destiny Wallace, and Katelyn Scales.



MT. OLIVE CHURCH, BALDWIN, ordained Harley Dillon as deacon Aug. 25. Shown are Dillon and pastor David Haynes.



MEADVILLE CHURCH, MEADVILLE, licensed Ray Carlock to the ministry Sept. 15. Shown are Carlock and his wife Janet.



CRESTVIEW CHURCH, PETAL, held a deacon ordination service for Freddie Langston Sept. 29. Shown are Langston and pastor Stephen Smith.



MT. MORIAH CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, held a Grandparent's Day Sept. 8. Shown are grandparents, grandchildren, and great-grandparents.



Children of **CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, collected food for world hunger.